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REVIEWS AND NOTES

NORSK SPROGHISTORIE. *Større utgave.* By Didrik Arup Seip. Kristiania, 1920. 64 pp. with preface.

This publication, as the preface (*forord*) states, is an enlarged version of the author's earlier text-book, *En liten norsk sprog-historie*. To this second edition have been added certain chapters (viz., on Primitive Norse and Old Norse) dealing with linguistic material of too advanced a nature to be of practical service to students in the Norwegian secondary schools. But for teachers of the Norwegian language (especially for foreigners not acquainted with the Norwegian dialects) this publication is an invaluable little guide.

As the title indicates, this work is not only a history of the official language of Norway (i. e., the Dano-Norwegian *riksmål*), but a history also of the *landsmål* and of the chief Norwegian dialects. The work is, therefore, in fact a linguistic history of Norway, in which the development of Norway's language *in toto* is presented in correlation with Swedish and Danish. This comparative method enables the reader to gain a very practical and valuable knowledge of the chief differences, both phonetic and syntactical, between these three Modern Scandinavian languages.

The chief merits of the book consist in the logical arrangement of the material and in the concise form and clarity of expression. Furthermore, Dr. Seip everywhere accommodates himself to the pedagogical requirements of his book; he is never too technical or abstract and carries the reader in the simplest and clearest way over many difficult phonetic problems. His sound practical sense is demonstrated, for instance, by his introduction of selections from Scandinavian literature (*Sprog-prøver*) to illustrate each period or status of Scandinavia's linguistic development.

The work is divided into six chapters: 1) *Innledning*, 2) *Urnordisk (till omkr. 800)*, 3) *Gammelnorsk (800-1350)*, 4) *Mellemnorsk (1350-1525)*, 5) *Sprogutviklingen i Norge (1525-1814)*, 6) *Sprogutviklingen i Norge efter 1814*.

1) The *Introduction* (p. 1-4) consists in a very brief analysis of the nature of language and of the relationship of the various Indo-European languages to one another. Exception may perhaps be taken to Dr. Seip's preference (p. 3) for the term *Gothic* over *East Germanic*, especially since the other two branches of the Germanic languages are designated according to geographical position (i. e., *West* and *North Germanic*): "Man regner gjerne tre germanske sproggrener, den *vestgermanske*, den *gotiske* (eller *østgermanske*) og den *nordiske* eller *nordgermanske*." Why not read, "Den *østgermanske* (eller *gotiske*)?"

2) The chapter on *Primitive Norse* (*Urnordisk*, p. 4-7) presents a very brief outline of the prehistoric status of the Scandinavian languages. Emphasis is laid upon those phonetic conditions which the Primitive Norse had in common with the Gothic on the one hand and with West Germanic on the other. In this connection it is not clear to the reviewer why Dr. Seip (p. 7) has not designated the North and West Germanic sound law according to which *z* developed into *R* (*r*), by the traditional terminology; especially, since it was a Dane, Karl Verner, after whom the law was named. Similarly in his discussion of the *First Sound Shifting* (p. 3), Dr. Seip does not state that the so-called *Germanic Sound Shifting* (*den såkalte germanske "lydforskyvning"*) is also commonly known as *Grimm's Law*. Dr. Seip seems to avoid technical terms wherever possible, in order to accommodate himself to the student uninitiated in technical vernacular. But it is a question whether a certain amount of technical terminology may not be of practical use to every student, especially in the case of the most commonly accepted terms, such as *Grimm's Law* or as *Verner's Law* (*Grammatical Change*).

3) The Chapter on *Old Norse* (*Gammelnorsk*, p. 7-20) is divided under two heads, viz., a) *The Language during the Viking Era* (*Sproget i vikingatiden*) from 800-1050, and b) *Old Norse* (*Norrønt mål*) from 1050-1350.

a) Dr. Seip here characterizes the status of the language in the first stages of its development out of the Primitive Norse. In his discussion of the so-called *a*-umlaut (*omlyd*) Dr. Seip correctly states (p. 9) that the *a*-umlaut operated at an earlier period than did the *i*- or the *u*-umlaut. But exception may be taken to his statement that when an unaccented *a* was lost, it exerted an influence on the foregoing vowel (*i* or *u*): "Når en trykklett stavelse med *a* falt bort, virket den på foregående vokal, men bare når denne vokalen var *i* eller *u*; *i* forandret sig till *e*, og *u* til *o*." Dr. Seip has here evidently followed the traditional view of the *a*-umlaut, established by Adolf Holtzmann,¹ and has not given due consideration to more recent investigations, such as, for instance, Professor Hermann Collitz's "Early Germanic Vocalism," *M.L.Ns.*, June 1918, p. 321-333. No one can deny that the *ø* in Old Norse *hol* is the result of an *a*-umlaut, but is Old Norse *hol* the regular phonetic development from Primitive Norse **hula*, as Dr. Seip maintains (p. 9)? It is far more likely, as Professor Collitz points out (*ibid.*, p. 332), that in monosyllabic forms the umlauted vowel (*ø* or *δ*) is not a regular phonetic development but the result of analogy with the dissyllabic forms of the word where the *-a-*

¹ Cf. Holtzmann's *Altdeutsche Grammatik*, I, 2, Leipzig 1870-75, p. 13: "Die Umlaute *e* und *u* in Wörtern wie *weg* *via*, *wolf* *lupus* können nur in einer Zeit entstanden sein, als die Nominative wirklich noch *wigas*, *wulfas* lauteten."

of the ending still remained intact (cf. also my article, "Zur A-Brechung im Nord- und Westgermanischen," *Journal of Eng. and Germ. Phil.*, XVIII, 1919, p. 379 f.). Otherwise how could Dr. Seip explain the Old Norse monosyllabic forms without *a*-umlaut, such as nom. sing. *fugl* over against nom. acc. plur. *foglar*? Obviously the *o* in the later monosyllabic form *fogl* is due to analogy with the dissyllabic forms like *foglar*, and therefore the *ø* in *fogl*, *hol*, etc., must be considered as an analogical *a*-umlaut.

Dr. Seip is still further from the truth when he maintains that the *ē* in Old Norse *verr* is the result of an *a*-umlaut (p. 9): "Verr 'mann' av urnordisk **wiraR* (jfr. lat. *vir*).¹" If Old Norse *verr* had been phonetically derived from **wiraR*, the nominative singular would have been **virr*, not *verr*, as has been shown above.

But it is out of the question to assume that the Primitive Norse form of this word was **wiraR*. Dr. Seip would, no doubt, admit that the *ai* (i. e., *ē*) in the Gothic word *waitr* (i. e., *wēr*) was not due to the *a*-umlaut (which did not operate in Gothic) but to a much earlier Germanic law (viz., the *r*-'breaking'). Why should we assume, then, that the Indo-European *ǵ* in this word (cf. Sanskrit *virā-s*, Latin *vir*) after passing thru the earlier Germanic status *ē* (cf. Gothic *wēr*) reverted to its original status *ǵ* in Primitive Norse (cf. **wir-aR*) and then finally returned to its earlier Germanic status *ē* (cf. O.N. *verr*) by reason of the *a*-umlaut? The vowel *ē* in the Gothic word *wēr* must represent the primitive vocalic status of this word in all the Germanic languages, and in spite of the Indo-European *i* the *ē* in North and West Germanic **wēr-* must, as in Gothic, be due not to an *a*-umlaut but to the Old Germanic umlaut (or 'breaking') before *r* (cf. Hermann Collitz, *ibid.*, pp. 328 ff.). The Primitive Norse form for this word must then have been **wēraR* and not **wiraR*. Dr. Seip has here evidently followed the traditional theory that the Gothic vowel system was peculiar to that language alone and not representative of the prehistoric status of all the Germanic languages.

b) This period (1050-1350) is characterized by its magnificent literary development. The Norsemen came into closer contact with foreign nations and consequently took up many foreign words into their own language. For students of German the most interesting fact is brought out (p. 15) that the Hanseatic League exerted such a far reaching influence upon the language and culture of the North.

In his analysis of the language of this period Dr. Seip states (p. 16) the conditions under which a syllable was either long or short. Under the category of *short* syllables, however, he has neglected to mention the fact that a radical syllable was considered short, if it contained a long vowel or a diphthong

followed immediately by another vowel, as, for instance, *bú-* in *búa* or *dey-* in *dey-ia* (cf. A. Heusler, *Aisl. Elementarbuch*, p. 16, §41). This statement should have been included as No. 5 under the rubrik *Kort var en stavelse*.

4) The period of *Medieval Norse (Mellemnorsk*, from 1350 to 1525, p. 20-28) is especially interesting as regards the influence of Danish and Swedish upon the Norwegian language (i. e., the *riksmål*) subsequent to the Calmar Union (1319). Low German also made further rapid encroachments upon the vocabulary and syntax of the Norwegian. Very important is Dr. Seip's analysis of the phonetic changes which the Danish (and partly also the Norwegian) underwent during this period; cf. especially the development of the original voiceless stops *p*, *t* and *k* into the corresponding voiced stops *b*, *d*, and *g*. For a student of Norwegian this knowledge in regard to the Danish is indispensable since it explains in such cases the relation between the orthography and the pronunciation of the Norwegian *riksmål*.

5) The history of the Norwegian language (i. e., the *riksmål*, p. 28-40) during this period (from 1525-1814) is primarily a history of the Danish language as spoken in Norway. The Modern Norwegian *riksmål* is here in the making and Dr. Seip reveals this fact to us by tracing those fundamentally Norwegian characteristics which later on were to make the *riksmål* an individual language as distinct from that of Denmark. In reading this chapter, the reviewer was impressed with the scientific inaccuracy of our English designation of the Norwegian *riksmål* as "Dano-Norwegian"; "Norwegian-Danish" would be a far more satisfactory term. Most instructive is Dr. Seip's enumeration (p. 30) of certain Norwegian words (quoted from Jens Bielke's *Dictionary* of 1636) which at this time were unintelligible to the Danes.

6) In the concluding chapter (p. 40-64) Dr. Seip traces the development of the Norwegian language (i. e., the *riksmål*, the *landsmål* and the dialects) from 1814 up to the present day. The history of the reform of the *riksmål* with the gradual infusion of Norwegian elements is given with admirable brevity and clearness. The relation of the *riksmål* both to the *landsmål* and to the Norwegian dialects is made clear by the sections devoted to these latter phases in the history of Norway's language. This relation is still further clarified by a resumé of the Norwegian dialects (*Oversikt over de norske dialekter*, p. 55-59). Dr. Seip here demonstrates his sound pedagogical sense by inserting (p. 58) a linguistic map of Norway, indicating the geographical boundaries of the chief dialects. From this admirable resumé of the Modern Norwegian dialects we see all the more clearly the real nature both of the Norwegian *riksmål* and of the *landsmål*, and we understand all the better

the reason for those reforms in orthography and usage which the law (*rettskrivnings-reformen*) of 1917 has permitted for both languages.

Dr. Seip concludes his book by a résumé of Norwegian peculiarities in the *riksmål* (*Særnorske eiendommeligheter i norsk riksmål*, p. 61-64). Many of his remarks, especially as regards syntax, should furnish invaluable knowledge to any student of the Norwegian language, especially if he is already acquainted with Danish and Swedish. The outstanding fact is that the Norwegian *riksmål* is rapidly developing along national (i. e., "norsk") lines, notably wherever the discarded form or construction in question is of Danish origin and at variance with the native Norwegian usage. To American students acquainted with all three Scandinavian languages it would seem as if the Norwegian *riksmål* were in this development approaching the Swedish, but Dr. Seip's analysis makes it clear that this impression is due to the fact that in many respects the native Norwegian language is closer to the Swedish than to the Danish.

Dr. Seip's work should recommend itself as a very useful text-book for all teachers of the Scandinavian languages in America, and ought to be of service also to more advanced pupils. Its chief value for us lies in the practical suggestions it offers for making our way out of the labyrinth of Norwegian orthography. The book is written in the reformed orthography of 1917 and therefore affords us a model for the written *riksmål* of the Norway of today. Teacher and student alike can profit by a careful comparison of Dr. Seip's language and orthography with that, for instance, of Wergeland, Ibsen and Bjørnson. The chief defect of the book seems to the reviewer to consist in Dr. Seip's antiquated theories regarding the Primitive Germanic vowel system, but this defect does not in the slightest degree detract from the usefulness of this publication as a text-book on the history of the Norwegian language. *Norsk Sproghistorie* ought to be included as a reference book in all our advanced courses in the Modern Scandinavian languages.

ALBERT MOREY STURTEVANT

Kansas University

ENGLISH PAGEANTRY: AN HISTORICAL OUTLINE.

Vol. 2. By Robert Withington. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, 1920.

With the publication of a second volume even larger than the first, Dr. Withington's exhaustive history of English pageantry is brought to a close. The work is one which the Harvard Press, I have no doubt, views with pride. It has many reasons for doing so.